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Keulen, S.; Kroeze, D.B.R.

### ***published in***

Management & Organizational History  
2014

### ***DOI (link to publisher)***

[10.1080/17449359.2014.982658](https://doi.org/10.1080/17449359.2014.982658)

### ***document version***

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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### ***citation for published version (APA)***

Keulen, S., & Kroeze, D. B. R. (2014). Introduction: The era of management:a historical perspective on twentieth-century management. *Management & Organizational History*, 9(4), 321-335.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17449359.2014.982658>

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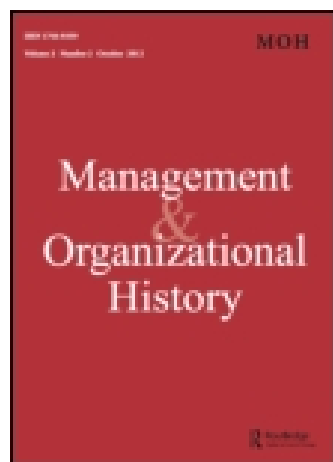
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Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



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## Management & Organizational History

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmor20>

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Published online: 16 Dec 2014.

To cite this article: Sjoerd Keulen & Ronald Kroeze (2014) Introduction: The era of management: a historical perspective on twentieth-century management, *Management & Organizational History*, 9:4, 321-335, DOI: [10.1080/17449359.2014.982658](https://doi.org/10.1080/17449359.2014.982658)

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## Introduction: The era of management: a historical perspective on twentieth-century management

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The twentieth century is a special period in the history of management. It is characterised by an extraordinary dissemination and diversification of management. However, the era consists of different phases. Inspired by the work of historians and philosophers of history who wrote on periodization as well as business and management historians who researched the development of management, we present a new periodization. Moreover, we suggest that the heyday of management in the 1980s and 1990s was followed by an ‘end’ of twentieth-century management. In addition, we argue that too much emphasised has been placed on the development of management in industry and too little on how management was adopted and represented in banks, public administration, politics and in popular culture. Thus we hope that a closer look at and different focus on twentieth-century management will improve our understanding of differences in the history of management and stimulate new debate.

**Keywords:** management history; periodization; management thought; management outside industry; twentieth century

A century ago, in 1911, Fredrick Taylor published *The Principles of Scientific Management*, an event widely acknowledged as an important moment in the history of modern management. Soon afterward, management disseminated and diversified. Management – explained as a time-bounded set of beliefs, ideas and practices by which to organize public and private organizations – became such a widely used phenomenon that one could no longer imagine a world without it. Thus, it could be argued that the twentieth century is a specific period in the history of management. Our aim for this special issue is to delve into the characteristics of this history by stressing developments that have not been studied, or have not yet been fully integrated in the history of management. This means that our approach to management is a broad one, and moves beyond the Chandlerian paradigm.

We start this introduction with some historiographical considerations concerning the field of management history, followed by a more detailed discussion of periodizations provided by other scholars. In the final sections, we will present our own periodization and introduce the historical approach used by the contributors to this issue, as well as the points that they try to argue in their articles.

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### Historiographical considerations

One of the main objectives of historians is to provide historical accounts that stress differences over time and to understand change within a broader context (Tosh 2010). From this perspective, the field of management history sometimes seems to stand out: it has a different understanding of ontology and epistemology as well as choice of method, time frame and subject. Within the field of management history, studies are published by scholars from various disciplines – especially organization studies, business history and ‘mainstream’ history – who are informed by different academic debates about what makes proper history writing (Keulen and Kroeze 2012). Therefore, in order to place this special issue in its context, we think it is helpful to give a short overview of management historiography (Munslow 2000, 143–145) that sheds light on the diversity of the field.

We can find studies about the role of management in first-century Palestine, based on Old Testament readings (Dyck, Starke, and Weimer 2012), on the use of management discourses by shipbuilders at the sixteenth-century Venetian Arsenal (Zan 2004), and on the use of the word ‘management’ in the English language (Muldoon and Marin 2012). Witzel (2009, xiv) treats management as ‘a constant theme throughout human civilization’, and because of this choice, he stresses similarities between management in the era of the tomb builders in Deir-el-Medina (about 1550–1080 BCE) and the early Hudson Bay Company (established in 1670). However, we do not find much explanation of the *differences* between the ways that management is used in all these historical cultures. This is not to say that modern concepts cannot be used for historical research that reaches further back than the modern era. There are interesting inquiries in which modern management theories and theories from economics are applied to ancient examples to illustrate that some phenomena, such as globalization, are much older than is often assumed (Moore and Lewis 2000, 2009). What is crucial, however, as Moore and Lewis stress, is the acknowledgement that ancient economic systems are ‘incomparably different from those of today’ (Moore and Lewis 2009, 4). Some historical overviews have their difficulties as well. Crainer (2000), for example, covers strictly one decade in each chapter of his book, and although he presents an insightful history of management, this choice hinders the narrative and de facto provides an ahistorical periodization: historical periods, recognizable by its specific culture, often cover more than one decade.

Several longitudinal histories of management also have their ‘problems’. They have been written with the aim to show that management has older roots than the emphasis on the Taylorian ‘revolution’ suggests (for a good early example, see Pollard 1965). However, by taking this perspective, some have oversimplified the specific development of management in the last century (George 1968; Witzel 2009) or lumped together important ‘management’ scholars as diverse as Machiavelli and Adam Smith (Wren and Greenwood 1998; Crowley and Sobel 2010). Of course, longitudinal studies of management can provide great insight into management and globalization (Moore and Lewis 2000; Karsten 2013; Karsten 2014, this issue), but some seem to deliver a more or less random history of management because the criteria for the selection of historical figures are arbitrary or unclear (Thuderoz 2006).

So far, an important set of studies has been provided by those scholars who have written about modern management development within a specific national culture, and in doing so take notice of the context in which management develops (the Netherlands: Karsten and van Veen 1998; Great Britain: Wilson and Thomson 2005; Japan: Vaszkun and Tsutsui 2012). The same holds true for historical contributions on management practices and ideas that concentrate on specific cases, mostly of American and European

business corporations such as Chrysler (Hyde 2003) and Philips Electronics (Karsten et al. 2009). These works are related to each other as regards choice of subject, time frame and historical method. The material is presented in the form of a narrative, management is used as a flexible concept by which to capture change over time, and the research is based on archival study and source criticism. Less room, however, is given to international comparisons.

Traditionally, a specific brand of interesting studies can be found in the Chandler-informed field of business history. Alfred Chandler is regarded as the most influential business historian worldwide (Amatori and Jones 2003) and his works, especially *Strategy and Structure* (1962) and *The Visible Hand* (1977), are treated at length in handbooks on business history (Pierenkemper 2000; Berghoff 2004; Jones and Zeitlin 2007; Amatori and Colli 2011). In Chandler's view, modern management started to develop in the late nineteenth century and spread during the first decades of the twentieth century (Wilson 1995, 134–137). What management was about can be deduced from the role of the manager and the structure of the organization. The manager is a professionally trained organizer, administrator or statistician, and his work can and should be sharply distinguished from the self-made entrepreneur-owner or the workers in the factories; management is about organizing large corporate industries into different 'divisions', a process that started in the interwar period and rapidly spread after 1945. Not surprisingly, this development coincided with the spread and establishment of Taylor's 'scientific management'. As Taylor (1911) had stressed, professional managers are necessary because management is about organizing complex processes in large industrial firms, on the basis of objective scientific rules instead of the 'rule-of-thumb or traditional knowledge'. Thus, the Chandlerian perspective is very useful to gain insight into the shift from traditional to modern scientific management around the turn of the century, and helps to explain that management was not only a philosophy or school of thought, but also a set of practices widely used and believed in. However, a downside of this perspective is that, because of its emphasis on industrial firms, management is mainly studied as an activity of industrial businesses. Since the mid-1990s, therefore, many have argued that the Chandlerian paradigm (or synthesis) should at least be complemented with other understandings of modern management development (Rosen 2013).

Some important changes in the 'field' of management history since the mid-1990s must be mentioned if the reader is to understand the perspective that we adopt in this issue. New specialized academic journals have been established, such as the *Journal of Management History* (1994) and *Management & Organizational History* (2004), which have concentrated on the changing rhetoric, representation and culture of management; the historiographical development of the field; and philosophical questions related to the study of management history. Traditional business history journals have also adapted to this trend and published articles about these themes, such as *Business History* (e.g. Clark and Rowlinson 2004; Kroeze and Keulen 2013), *Business History Review* (e.g. Hansen 2012) and *Enterprise and Society* (e.g. Godelier 2009). These recent developments have established a renewed enthusiasm for improving the knowledge of management development over time and place, knowledge often based on an explicit theoretical and methodological starting point.

Our approach is informed by national studies on management development and Chandler-informed research, and fully subscribes to the recent changes in the field of management history. To further develop the field, we suggest integrating this knowledge with insights developed within the field of international business (Kipping and Üsdiken 2008), political science (Bevir and Rhodes 2006, 2010), public administration (Pollitt and

Bouckaert 2011), cultural studies (Rhodes and Lilley 2012) and modern and contemporary history (Sørensen 2001; O'Hara 2012; Hediger and Vonderau 2009; Couperus 2009; Kroeze and Keulen 2012). Studies within these fields have shown that the rise of management since the turn of the century is a much broader development than often assumed: it is not only industrial firms but also banks, public organizations and popular culture that were affected by management, a process in which often specific actors (consultants and gurus) played a decisive role (Kipping and Engwall 2002). Interdisciplinary cooperation, cross-sector analysis and international comparison can help to highlight these characteristics.

### The importance of periodization

Only through a historically informed approach can one establish the content and character of twentieth-century management, and within history, periodization is crucial for understanding change over time. Periodization is 'one of the most fundamental operations historians undertake' to manage and classify time and create coherence (Jordanova 2000, 114). Periodization can follow a variety of patterns: from periodization by events (revolutions, wars), rulers and dynasties (Tudor, Wilhelmine), via descriptions of periods (modern history, the swinging sixties), types of government (tsarist Russia, communist Russia) or cultural styles (Baroque), to metaphors (golden age, industrial revolution) (Jordanova 2000, 131–140). Periodization is important to historians because it shows the researcher's social-philosophical opinion. This creates coherence in time by clustering related events in distinguishable periods through which historians emphasize continuity or discontinuity and explain their understanding of historical change and historical agency in history (Lorenz 2006, 195, 196). Thus, periodization is intertwined with historical theory, and 'once firmly established, periodization exerts a formidable, often subliminal, influence on the refinement and elaboration of theory' (Green 1995, 99). Moreover, a period often becomes clearer when it has ended. As historians know from Hegel: 'The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk' (Kearney 2004). That is why it is hard to periodize the present, and it is the reason why historians prefer 'temporal distance' from their object of study (Bevernage and Lorenz 2013). Supported by Karsten's article, we will argue below that there are reasons to suggest that the era of twentieth-century management has come to end, and not only because we have entered the twenty-first century. This provides us with some temporal distance that helps to pinpoint the character of twentieth-century management.

So far, several periodizations of management have been suggested, the most meaningful of which we think have been offered by Wilson and Thomson (2005), Wren and Bedeian (2009), Kipping (2002) and Barley and Kunda (1992). We are inspired by their periodizations and all show at least some similarities with the periodization that we will be presenting. In their history of management thought, Wren and Bedeian (2009) distinguish four periods and place a lot of emphasis on the first 50 years of the modern management era. The first period is named Early Management Thought and is characterized by what it is not: not industrial and, once industrialization had started, not Taylorian. The Scientific Management Era follows, which runs from the works of Taylor until the Hawthorne studies (1924), and politically from President Theodore Roosevelt to Franklin Roosevelt (1901–1945). The third period is characterized as The Social Person Era, running from the Hawthorne Experiment to the work of Luther Gulick and Lyndal Urwick (1937), and politically from Franklin Roosevelt to Eisenhower (1945–1961). After that, a fourth period can be distinguished, The Modern Era, which runs roughly from



the 1950s, starting with Peter Drucker's (1954) *The Practice of Management*, until today. During this period, management diversifies, and ranges from strategy and leadership to human relations and operation research. Although Wren and Bedeian did a great job trying to integrate many different developments, and we have happily made use of it, their periodization has some lacunae. First, it focuses predominantly on the development of management in the USA. Second, it treats the period from roughly 1945 to the present as one single period. This choice deprives them of the chance to explain why so many different forms of management were developed after the Second World War, and which agencies influenced this rapid growth. And, third, it does not consider the development of management within public administration and political culture.

For Great Britain, Wilson and Thomson (2005) have distinguished a different periodization, based on the historical development of management within British industry and schools of management thought. Their periodization is very helpful. They characterize the era until 1870 as pre-classical, because it is based on personal relations in manufacturing. The second period is known for its 'scientific management' character and runs from the 1870s to the 1950s. Then, the 1960s and 1970s form a new period in which management is known for its 'dimensions of change' and the focus is on strategy, mainly because of the adaption of the M-form and the dominance of McKinsey consulting. The era of the 1980s and 1990s is one of 'managerial capitalism', highly influenced by the liberalization of credit. They also distinguish three schools of thought: the classical school (1880s–1960s), comprising Fredrick Taylor, Max Weber, Henri Fayol and Mary Parker Follett; the humanistic school (1930s–1980s), which includes Elton Mayo, Abraham Maslow, Richard Cyert, James March and Herbert Simon; and the management-science school (1950s to present), characterized by the structural analysis approach of Peter Drucker and Alfred Chandler, as well as concepts such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Learning Organization and Knowledge Management. Some questions can be raised, however. In their periodization, Wilson and Thomson use different perspectives to distinguish managerial periods: economic history, the historical developments of firms, changes in managerial functions, and the development of management schools of thought. As all of these developments are presented in separate chapters, relations between developments are not always clear. Moreover, the development of management outside economic history, industrial firms and schools of management thought, for example in the public sector, is not taken into account.

Kipping (2002, 37–38) provides a periodization of the different waves of consultancy in the twentieth century. As these waves are reactions to the major changes in business and management, they provide a useful indication of the appreciation and spread of different forms of management throughout the twentieth century. Kipping identifies three waves. First there was scientific management, whose major expansion took place between the 1930s and 1950s, and whose key concept was 'efficiency'. During the second wave, between the 1960s and the 1990s, organization and strategy were crucial, as well as decentralization and portfolio planning. The third wave started in the 1990s and centered on 'internal and external co-ordination'.

A fourth interesting periodization (see Table 1) was developed by Barley and Kunda (1992). They distinguished between 'rational' and 'normative' management, and emphasized the importance of rhetoric and ideology for the understanding of management development – in a way that has similarities with what historians would call *zeitgeist* (Førland 2008).

However, because of the time of their research and publications, Kipping, and especially Barley and Kunda, were not able to fully integrate the development of



Table 1. Periodization of managerial ideologies, 1900–1992.

Ideology	Era	Tenor
Scientific management	1900–1923	Rational
Welfare capitalism/ human relations	1923–1955	Normative
Systems rationalism	1955–1980	Rational
Organizational culture	1980–present [1992]	Normative

Source: Barley and Kunda (1992).

management after 2000. From this moment onward, the increasing critique on the popular management ideas and practices of the 1980s and 1990s could no longer be ignored. This retrospective view provides a ‘temporal distance’ that has inspired us to suggest an ‘end’ of twentieth-century management.

### A new periodization of twentieth-century management

All periodizations discussed above stress change over time and indicate dominant sets of beliefs, ideas and practices in specific periods. However, we here present a new periodization based on the insights put forward by Wren and Bedeian (2009), Wilson and Thomson (2005), Kipping (2002) and Barley and Kunda (1992). Our periodization concentrates on twentieth-century management, and is informed by knowledge of longitudinal management development (e.g. Amatori and Jones 2003; Jones and Zeitlin 2007; Amatori and Colli 2011). In addition, there are two other things we want to stress that actually are the backbone of our periodization: the seemingly unrestrained spread of management; and the development and popularization of management also outside the industrial sector in the twentieth century. These findings become clear when we look back and include in our analysis the resonance of management in political and popular culture. Including this aspect will strengthen already established ideas about, for example, the importance of the Tayloresque management period. However, it will also provide new insights into what exactly was considered so beneficial about modern management from a much broader perspective, because we look at the development and stereotypical character of management outside the industrial sector. These features, and the specific characteristics of management in the sub-periodizations, will be further explained in the other contributions to this special issue.

Although for the sake of clarity we present fixed periods, we do not want to suggest that management forms cannot cross the imagined boundaries of a period, nor that management of one period is completely abandoned in the next. New management beliefs, concepts and practices often established themselves gradually and only after a period of struggle and debate. Periods should therefore be understood as waves that flow into each other. In addition, management innovations always originate from existing ideas or incentives. TQM, for example, became dominant in the 1980s but was based on the work of William Edward Deming, which can be described as Tayloresque (Deming 1953). And the concept of TQM became highly popular only after the *NBC* broadcast ‘If Japan Can . . . Why can’t We’, in which it was presented as a fruitful method to compete with the new industrial giant Japan (*Christian Science Monitor*, June 23, 1980). Finally, we do not delve too deeply into the reasons *why* management has changed over time, although in this introduction and in the separate contributions, events, processes and structural changes are discussed that may help us understand why a certain set of ideas and practices was popular in one period and less so, or no longer, in another.

The first period (1900–1940) is dominated by scientific management ideas and practices that were introduced by, derived from or embodied by Frederick Taylor, and had the upper hand in the era before the Second World War. Taylor explicitly presented scientific management as a clear break with the past when ‘rule-of-thumb or traditional knowledge’ dominated. That it spread widely in a way not seen before can be concluded from its rapid introduction into the public sector. Administrative historian Jos Raadschelders (2003, 329) has stressed that the development of public administration ideas and practices in state bureaucratic organizations over the period 1906–1937 ‘is commonly referred to as the scientific management period’ within administrative history. Taylor’s work became so popular across countries and sectors that within 10 years after the publication of *The Principles of Scientific Management*, Taylor was parodied in Yevgeny Zamyatin’s ([1924] 1952) popular novel *We*, which he wrote in 1920–1921. Zamyatin used a futuristic totalitarian-controlled society as a critical reflection on the development of Soviet Russia. In the novel, Taylor is stereotypically and ironically presented as ‘the greatest genius of the ancients’ and the main character asks: ‘How could they write whole libraries about some Kant and take only slight notice of Taylor, of this prophet who saw ten centuries ahead?’ (Zamyatin 1952, 32). Scientific management was also introduced on the local public level (see also Couperus 2014, this issue). There, Taylor’s key concepts could be linked to the advance of rationalization and efficiency, processes that have been described by Weber (1922). Therefore, if we suggest that the ideas and practices can be understood from Taylor’s work, this does not mean that this period in the history of management was only about Taylor. His ideas have many similarities with Max Weber’s and Henry Fayol’s (and vice versa). How closely the adoption of management in the field of business was related to its acceptance in public administration can be illustrated by the work of Henri Fayol (1937), who developed a general theory of management for both state and industry (Merkle 2002). Both Taylor’s and Fayol’s work were further developed and disseminated throughout Europe by thinkers such as Lyndall Urwick (Brech, Thomson, and Wilson 2010).

The second period (1940–1960) is characterized by the spread of American management with the help of the Marshall Plan and the Japanese recovery program, and by the diversification of management. Politically, this is the era of the welfare state, which can be linked to broader processes such as industrialization, postwar recovery and the rise of Keynesianism. Although Tayloresque ideas and practices were still important, we do see a change, for example when we look at the work of Peter Drucker (1954) and note its popularity. The work of this first modern management guru shows that management was about the use of fixed procedures or ‘management-by-objectives’. The diversification of management in this period was the result of the incorporation of insights provided by the behavioral revolution in the social sciences. Again, this diversification influenced public administration, where the new insights were used to establish welfare policies and environmental care. *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm* by Cyert and March (1963) offers a good illustration. The authors took Herbert Simon’s concept of ‘bounded rationality’ – which was quite popular in economics, sociology and the political sciences – to illustrate that decision processes are not fully rational but bounded by the available information and time. The rapidity of the continuing spread of Tayloresque and the new behaviourist-inspired management, also into the public, political and popular spheres, can be further seen in the objections to the growing role of managerial experts in both government and industry (Burnham 1941; Bell 1947, 1960; Bendix 1956; Thoenes 1962). The criticism, however, did not mean an ‘end of management’, because it was mainly heard and embraced in the intellectual periphery of society.

The third period (1960–1980) is known for its focus on the role and restructuring of top management, which became evident in the emergence of strategy (Chandler 1962; Ansoff 1965), the importance of top-down budgeting, and the growing popularity of Henry Mintzberg's (1973) ideas about the manager as a 'figurehead with ceremonial duties', stressing the manager's strategic importance. This can be regarded as both a reaction to and the result of the merger and acquisition wave of the 1960s that had created large and diversified private conglomerates. This development was further emphasized by the shift from shop floor to boardroom, which can be clearly seen in the emergence of modern management consulting and the way in which McKinsey and Company actively spread the M-form in both the public and private sectors (McKenna 2008; Kipping and Westerhuis, this issue). The M-form stands for the multidivisional form: a company with a central headquarters and decentralized and dispersed units. The growing importance of strategic management is also shown by the rapid growth of abstract management concepts, imagining a link between many different and diverse activities within an organization. In the 1960s, the government adopted its own concept with the Planning-Programming-Budget System (Solem and Werner 1968). Moreover, when John Argenti wrote *Corporate Collapse* in 1968, he identified just over 100 concepts. Seven years later, at a sold-out management conference in the Netherlands, he said: 'I'm now rewriting and updating this same book and guess how many techniques there are now – more than 300!' (Karsten and van Veen 1998, 22). The spread of management is also reflected in the fact that it not only influenced large, but also small and rural organizations and places outside Europe and America (see Ehlers on South Africa, this issue).

In the fourth period (1980–2000), the growing attention for the role and behavior of the top manager and the spread of strategic management concepts come together in the individualization and popularization of management. Part of this was caused by the changing circumstances: the emergence of New Right and monetarism (or neoliberal politics), which favored the role of the individual, urged for fundamental strategic decisions and restructuring of finance and economics to cure the recessions of the 1970s. Thanks to the scope provided by the focus on the individual manager and creative aspects of management, exemplified by the work of Mintzberg, the manager became the new hero of the 1980s, so that management got to the heart of popular culture. Management gurus and chief executive officers (CEOs) became widely known and admired (Huczynski 1993). The popularization of CEOs and management was symbolized by the success of *In Search of Excellence* by Peters and Waterman (1982). The popularity of managers helped pave the way for the introduction of new system approaches such as TQM in the 1980s. TQM should be understood as a welcome answer to the declining productivity and recession of the 1970s, and the need for fundamental change. In the 1990s, when management spread under the banner of neoliberalism, managers and management became less focused on long-term change. Now, management was about quick but dramatic change, embodied by 'shock' managers, and symbolized by radical methods such as Business Process Reengineering (Hammer and Champy 1993) and concepts such as 'shareholder value', with their emphasis on financial success in a short time span (Collins 2001). Again, in the same way the appeal of management was felt within public administration. There, civil servants presented themselves as 'managers' and made use of management concepts for maintaining high service and increasing efficiency at a time of cost-cutting (Kroeze and Keulen, this issue). At first, governments turned to management concepts that were popular in the private sector, but from 1993 onward they found their own management guru classic: Osborne and Gaebler's (1993) *Reinventing Government*.

This New Public Management (NPM) ‘movement’ was seen as the standard for good government, until 2000 (Hood 2007).

Since 2000, management has become a victim of criticism in both industry and government. We think that the severity of the criticism is different from the uneasiness with management in other periods, and see this as a change that has affected the development and distribution of management, especially outside the industrial sector. Management concepts that focused on the short term and on shareholder value were delegitimized after a series of fraud cases (e.g. Enron, Worldcom, Parmalat and Ahold). This led to the popularization of long-term approaches such as the Toyota Way (Liker 2003) and growing enthusiasm for Indian business approaches (Capelli et al. 2010). Moreover, after the popularity of ‘rock star CEOs’, management gurus and government restructuring by management consultants in the 1980s and 1990s, we now see an emergence of anti-guru gurus who take a critical stance toward the dominance of management, management consultants and managers in society (Micklethwait and Wooldridge 1997; Pinault 2000; Kipping and Engwall 2002). There has also been a sharp rise in ‘blame it on the manager’ literature and critical assessments of the ideology of management (Hoopes 2003; Pearson 2009). In politics, ‘managerialism’ – which was a forceful element of the Third Way politics of the 1990s – is heavily criticized (Kroeze and Keulen, this issue; Keulen and Kroeze 2011). In public administration, the critical stance can be derived from the uneasiness about and abandonment of NPM (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). The ideas and practices of the craftsman, entrepreneur, professional and leader have gained popularity (Table 2).

### Methodology and outline of this special issue

All authors of this special issue are trained academic historians. Most of them work in faculties of arts or humanities, some in business faculties or business schools. All authors are familiar with the sociocultural approach, which is now common among academic historians (Te Velde 2010, 365) and known in the field of business and management history as well (e.g. Hansen 2012). Thus, the contributors are familiar with theoretical and methodical considerations on how to research management history, but the case studies presented here mostly combine archival research with source criticism to uncover management developments. The contributions are examples of a hermeneutic approach (Müller 2009), which is often considered ‘the very basis of historical research’ (Ziemann and Dobson 2009, 2). Therefore, this special issue can be viewed as a contribution to the understanding of the history of twentieth-century management, as well as a contribution to the ‘historic turn’ within management studies (Clark and Rowlinson 2004), and may act as an example of a theoretically informed historical narrative of management (Keulen and Kroeze 2012).

Table 2. The periodization of twentieth-century management.

Period	Description
1900–1940	Scientific management, focus on the shop floor
1940–1960	Humanistic or behavioristic management, focus on the shop floor
1960–1980	Strategic management, focus on top management
1980–2000	Popular and individualized management, a broad focus on ‘managers’
2000–present	Critical management (or the ‘end’ of twentieth-century management), focus on ‘blame it on the manager’

What is crucial for historical research is to use an approach that is flexible enough to study different contexts and changes over time. Thus, to follow the development of management over time, we do not use a universal or sharply defined definition of management. However, on a more abstract level readers will see that in every contribution, management is regarded as a time-bounded set of beliefs, ideas or practices to organize public or private organizations. All authors also integrate their findings into a narrative in which they stress that management is a time-biased and cultural phenomenon. A historical narrative approach is a good method and form of presentation, as it provides meaning and insights into the behavior of historical actors within their context (Rüsen 2006). Together, the articles offer a cross-temporal perspective and tell a bigger story. Empirical studies, however, can never provide a full overview. Therefore, the contributions highlight important episodes in the history of twentieth-century management that can be related to the periodization introduced above.

The different case studies offer four detailed presentations of what management meant in the different periods and places, thus providing material for a comparison over time and place. The studies show that the introduction and adoption of new management beliefs, ideas and practices in a specific context and setting was always subject of debate, during which management itself was critically assessed and reformulated. Those debates exemplify moments of historical change on the level of management thought and practices.

In the first article, Stefan Couperus (2014) looks at the rise of management during the first decades of the twentieth century (c. 1900–1940), the period of scientific management. His approach differs from traditional analyses in that he does not look at the rise and meaning of management in business organizations, but at the adoption and spread of scientific management in the public sector and on local government level. His study focuses on public administration reform in cities in the USA and Europe. Couperus makes clear how the work of Taylor and Fayol was disseminated and used to organize the public sector. To understand the discursive and practical impact of managerial thought on municipal administration, he places a European case study – the Netherlands and its capital city Amsterdam – against the background of the American reform. Therefore, his analysis should be seen as an example of not only how in some city governments or in the Netherlands scientific management was used, but also as an example of how dominant this set of practices and ideas was in the public and private sector, and how both influenced each other, in the decades before the Second World War. Moreover, from the article can be derived how management in the prewar era differed from management in the 1980s and 1990s. First, management was used as a guiding idea to take administration ‘out of politics’, whereas in the last two decades of the twentieth century, politicians themselves became ‘managers’ and vice versa. Second, unlike the 1980s and 1990s, the introduction of scientific management was received with much scepticism, which hampered its spread.

In the second article, Anton Ehlers (2014) focuses on the modernization process of the typical South African institutions of the rural trust in the 1950s and 1960s. In this period and within these non-industrial organizations, management techniques and systems such as budgeting were adopted. This was seen as necessary to compete in the merger and acquisition wave of those days. Via an in-depth case study of the Trust Association and the predecessors of the Boland Bank, Ehlers’ narrative shows how the management of trusts made sense of this process. His article should also make us aware of the fact that managerial ideas and practices were influential outside the ‘center’ (USA and Europe) already shortly after the war, and before the rise of large multinational consultancy firms such as McKinsey. Moreover, this process took place in a medium-sized, originally rural



and cooperative organization, not in a large and highly diversified industrial firm. This again shows that management rapidly became a global organizational and guiding force in the twentieth century.

In the third article, Matthias Kipping and Gerarda Westerhuis (2014) explain how the multidivisional organizational structure spread throughout Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. They show how the modern banker became a manager through the adoption of a management structure, and also make clear that management consultants played a crucial role in this process. They do this by an in-depth case study of the transformation of the Dutch AMRO bank. In line with the focus on the role of the manager described in the section on periodization above, bankers changed from 'professionals' into 'managers'. Moreover, Kipping and Westerhuis show the dominance of a managerial concept such as the M-form within a non-industrial firm, which signified a qualitative as well as quantitative transformation within organizations that made strategic decisions more important. It also becomes clear how quickly, often with the help of McKinsey, the 'managerialization' of the banking sector took place: within 10 years for Dutch banks. Strikingly, also, one of the conclusions is that the emergence of the modern bank organization with a focus on financial investment (and risks) took place before the rise of neoliberal-informed politics in the 1980s. In this way, Kipping and Westerhuis stress the independent, maybe even uncontrollable, spread of management in the twentieth century, which can also be derived from the other contributions.

In the fourth article, Ronald Kroeze and Sjoerd Keulen (2014) discuss the popularization of management in popular culture, public administration and politics during the 1980s and 1990s. They show how politicians purposely styled themselves as managers as part of a process to cut back government and reform the welfare state. Moreover, they explain how management was not only popularized in the political debate but also reshaped the policy process within government by concentrating on party politics and environmental policy in the Netherlands. The popularization and individualization of management was therefore not only a popular rhetoric, but also a historical development with important consequences. Finally, Kroeze and Keulen use their study to illustrate a Western process and to reflect on the decline of management from 2000 onward.

In the last article, Luchien Karsten (2014) provides a longitudinal perspective on modern management from an original viewpoint, interesting to a historian: the use, understanding and meaning of concepts of time in management. He shows how management can be viewed as the discipline of how to rule over the time of subordinates, and implicitly and explicitly relates his overview to the periodization provided in this introduction. Karsten also illustrates the benefits of a longitudinal perspective. By combining our periodization with his own, Karsten challenges the fifth period of our periodization – the 'end of management'. He argues that it could be considered a new phase in the development of time management, which had already been looming since the 1980s. Hence, he stresses that a periodization depends on the historian's point of reference as well.

Finally, from all the articles in this issue, at least two other overall conclusions become clear. First, that the transfer of management ideas and practices from one country to another, but also from one sector to another, proves more difficult than is generally suggested in management literature and by consultants. Second, that in every case, a 'translation' was needed to make management acceptable in the new context. From this perspective, the study of management history, and the lessons that can be derived from it, is also beneficial for those working outside the academia.

### Acknowledgements

This special issue is the result of the session ‘The century of management: from Taylor to Prahalad. The development of modern management from a historical, political, economic and global perspective, 1911–2011’ at the World Economic History Conference, Stellenbosch University, South Africa, 9–13 July 2012. We would like to thank the participants and audience for their contributions; Prof. Michael Rowlinson, as former editor of *Management & Organizational History*, for his support; and the external reviewers for their comments on earlier versions of this introduction.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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